



TOP STORY

Legislative Day 2: Senate Gears Up for Governor's Address

By Matt Colvin

C H A M B E R
(Jan. 12, 2010) – The Georgia Senate entered Day 2 of the 2010 General Assembly planning for tomorrow's State of the State Address. Governor Perdue is expected to announce his budget recommendations for this year's legislative session during his annual speech, which will be his last as his second term expires next January.

The General Assembly will be forced to cut an estimated \$1.5 billion from the current FY2010 budget as they are constitutionally required to balance the FY10 budget, matching it with state revenue collections since July.

To make matters worse, legislators are anticipating a budget recommendation for FY 2011 well below the last several years. That means lawmakers must work together to

find the most efficient use of state dollars and make targeted cuts in government while maintaining critical services such as education, state health care and public service.

As Senators prepare for tomorrow's address and budget hearings with the House next week, Tuesday's activities in the Chamber were brief and concise. A number of resolutions were passed by Lt. Governor Casey Cagle, honoring many local constituents and groups around the state. All Senate bills are currently awaiting committee assignment and consideration before making their way to the floor for a vote. Several Senators took a brief moment to address several legislative issues they expect to address during the course of this year's session. Sen. Gail Buckner (D-Jonesboro) is seeking a way to keep \$1.5 million in the state budget to keep Georgia's Outdoor Therapeutic Programs active for troubled young adults. Sen. Ross Tolleson (R-Perry), chairman of the Senate Natural Resources Committee, gave a brief update on the ongoing tri-state water issue. Tolleson is leading the Senate with legislation seeking statewide solutions to



Sen. Ross Tolleson (R-Perry) gives update on water issue.

Seabaugh Introduces Common Sense Lawful Carry Act

By Raegan Weber

ATLANTA (Jan. 12, 2010) – Today Majority Whip Sen. Mitch Seabaugh (R-Sharpsburg) filed Georgia's Common Sense Lawful Carry Act, which amends the current firearms legislation. Seabaugh cited confusion in the current law and presented how his bill will make the necessary corrections to provide lawfully carrying citizens and law enforcement clear guidelines.

"Laws should be easy to follow, simple to enforce and always balance public safety and private citizens' rights. This legislation will get us there," said Seabaugh. "This legislation is fair to lawfully carrying citizens and ensures that any infractions and prohibitions are monitored and reported correctly, effectively and efficiently. This is common sense legislation that upholds community safety and personal freedoms."

The Common Sense Lawful Carry Act provides clearly defined carry areas, a more streamlined system for permitting and reporting of violations, and greater personal prop-

erty rights by allowing property owners to determine whether firearms can be carried on their property. The legislation still provides strong consistencies for public and private K-12 and secondary schools, school functions and government agency offices.

Seabaugh is pushing two major features of the bill – removing the confusion behind what constitutes a "public gathering" and bringing



Sen. Mitch Seabaugh (R-Sharpsburg) and Sen. Chip Rogers (R-Woodstock) at press conference introducing bill.

all rules regulations and licensing under the guidance of the Secretary of State's office. Many law enforcement officials throughout the state have expressed their confusion of how to enforce and even prosecute offenders under the current "public gathering" definitions. In addition, each of Geor-

gia's 159 counties has a different way of processing and issuing licenses. By bringing the system under the Secretary of State's office, each county will have the same standards. The amendment maintains all background checks currently in place while imposing new disqualifiers on who can obtain a license.

Sen. Seabaugh also noted that he has reached out to representatives from Georgians for Gun Safety and Million Moms March so he may have a chance to walk them through these updates. His plan is to have a productive conversation without speculation and present the facts of the legislation.

All federal firearms laws and regulations still apply. With this legislation, Georgia's firearms laws will be in addition to federal laws without being contradictory or duplicative. Restaurant owners, churches and any other private property owners will have the choice to permit lawfully carried weapons on their property, or not to permit these weapons. Law-abiding citizens will be able to secure their weapons in a

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Georgia's potential water crisis and mentioned he is coordinating his work with the Governor, Lt. Governor, and newly-elected House Speaker David Ralston (R-Blue Ridge).

Sen. Ronald Ramsey (D-Lithonia) took a brief moment to recognize new Atlanta City President Ceasar Michell who was present for Tuesday's session day.

Senate Majority Leader Chip Rogers (R-Woodstock) concluded the day by announcing the Senate and House are working out the details for a long-term adjournment schedule and will make a formal announcement in the near future.

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locked compartment in a vehicle that is parked in the parking facility of a government building, courtroom, jail, prison, any public school or private entity prohibiting their weapons.

Schools are still protected by school safety zones in which firearms cannot be carried at all. These zones are noted to be within 1,000 feet of any real property owned or leased to any public or private elementary school, secondary school, or school board and used for elementary or secondary education. This includes school

functions as well as school property.

“Last year I held a series of study committee meetings that were an open forum for Georgians to express their concerns about the current carry laws. I listened to those concerns and developed this bill. As we go through the process of amending this law, I’m committed to working with all concerned parties to create a law that is sensible and realistic,” said Seabaugh.

The Comprehensive Firearms Law Study Committee was created in

the 2008 session to examine Georgia’s firearms laws and the way these laws are applied in our state. Seabaugh chaired the committee and held a series of public hearings regarding Georgia’s firearms law. The committee heard testimony from a variety of constituent groups including Georgians for Gun Safety, Georgia Trial Lawyers, Georgia Sheriff’s Association, Georgia Carry, the University System of Georgia and various religious groups.

Cagle and Senate Committee on Assignments Appoint Dan Moody as Chairman of Senate Ethics Committee

By Jaillene Hunter

Lt. Governor Casey Cagle and the Senate Committee on Assignments announced today that Senate Majority Caucus Chairman, Dan Moody, will serve as the new Senate Ethics Committee Chairman.

“Senator Dan Moody is a trusted and thoughtful senator who will lead this committee with integrity. We have full confidence in Senator Moody and his leadership as Committee Chairman.

“The Senate has a strong and consistent record for increased transparency and openness in government and it is my belief that real ethics reform will incorporate an extremely robust transparency piece. As new avenues for openness and transparency and additional ethics reform legislation are considered and enacted, we look forward to working with Senator Moody,” said Lt. Governor Casey Cagle.

“I am honored to be named as Chairman of the Ethics Committee and will work diligently to guide our efforts in a way that is reasonable and beneficial to our

state and the constituents we represent,” said Senator Dan Moody.

Moody currently serves as Chairman of the Appropriations’ Education Subcommittee, Secretary of the Insurance & Labor Committee (ex-officio), and is a member the powerful Rules Committee. He also serves on the Regulated Industries & Utilities Committee, the Education & Youth Committee, the Committee on Assignments, and the Administrative Affairs Committee.



Senator Moody takes over the Chair of the Ethics Committee due to Senator Eric Johnson’s resignation from the State Senate. Senator George Hooks serves as the vice-chair of the Ethics Committee. Other members include Senator John Crosby, Senator Gloria Butler, Senator John Douglas, Senator Bill Hamrick, Senator Jack Hill, Senator Doug Stoner and Senator Don Thomas.

The Ethics Committee has jurisdiction over legislation addressing moral and ethical issues, especially those related to governmental entities and the relationship of lobbyist and the government.

Legislative Process Dates

Important Dates in the Legislative Process

Introduction - Last day to file and/or 1st Read in Senate.

30th day - last day to introduce General Senate bills and resolutions (even year). [Rule 3-1.2 (b)]

30th day - last day to accept General House bills and resolutions. [Rule 3-1.2 (b)]

39th day - last day to introduce General Senate bills and resolutions (odd year). [Rule 3-1.2 (b)]

**Note: Senate bills and resolutions must be filed with the Secretary before 4:00 p.m. to be 1st read on the next legislative day.*

Deadlines for passage in current year

Committee Report Deadlines - Last day to read report. Report submitted to Secretary by convening.

28th day - General Senate bills and resolutions.

38th day - Local Senate bills and resolutions.

38th day - General House bills and resolutions.

40th day - Local House bills and resolutions.

Calendar Management

Calendar in numerical order after 2nd reading of legislation; days 1-5. [Rule 4-2.10 (a)]

Rules Committee sets the calendar for days 6 - 40. [Rule 4-2.10 (b)]

General Senate Bills and Resolutions

26th day - File with Secretary of the Senate. [Rule 3-1.2 (a)]

27th day - 1st Reading and referral to committee. [Rule 3-1.2 (b)]

28th day - Committee report read upon convening. (A recommitted bill already 2nd read - report day 29.)

29th day - 2nd Reading. [Rule 4-2.6]

30th day - Passage [Rule 4-2.10 (a)] and immediate transmittal to House. [Rule 4-2.14]

Local Senate Bills and Resolutions

35th day - File with Secretary of the Senate. [3-1.2 (a)]

36th day - 1st Reading and referral to committee. (Cannot pass for 2 days.) [Rule 4-2.4 (c)]

38th day - Favorable report by committee, passage and immediate transmittal to the House. [Rule 4-2.14]

39th day - 2nd Reading in House.

40th day - Favorable report and passage in House.

General House Bills and Resolutions

30th day - Transmitted from House and received by Secretary.

31st day - 1st Reading and referral to committee. [Rule 3-1.2 (b)]

38th day - Favorable report upon convening and 2nd reading. (Applies to days 36 - 38) [Rule 4-2.6]

39th day - Passage. [Rule 4-2.10 (a)]

40th day - Passage of bills or resolutions tabled day 39; removed from the table on day 40. [Rule 4-2.10 (a)]

Local House Bills and Resolutions

39th day - 1st Reading and referral to committee.

40th day - Favorable report by committee and passage.

** Note: On the 30th day and on the last three days of session, bills and resolutions needing action from the House are automatically immediately transmitted. [Rule 4-2.14]*

40th day - Passage of bills or resolutions tabled day 39; removed from the table on day 40. [Rule 4-2.10 (a)]